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CIHR– INSTITUTE OF POPULATION & PUBLIC HEALTH

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Message from the Scientific Director

Renewed Hope for Public Health in Canada

With the recent appointment of Dr. David Butler-Jones as Canada's first Chief Public Health Officer (who is a member of our Institute's Advisory Board) [picture on page 2], the establishment of the Public Health Agency of Canada and the six national collaborating centres, and the Minister of State for Public Health, Dr. Carolyn Bennett, Canada is well on its way to laying the foundation for strengthening Canada's public health infrastructure and addressing the Naylor gap. [View report at: "http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/protection/warnings/sars/learning.html"]

Just a short year and half ago, while Canada was still reeling from the aftermath of SARS, a group of public health and health system leaders were convening in Calgary at the CPHA conference to review a paper on the organization and funding of public health services commissioned by IPPH. [View report at: "http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/19573.html"] The report outlines the scope and functions of public health, as well as the current challenges faced by the system. It also proposes the required elements for creating and sustaining a robust public health infrastructure in Canada. This catalytic meeting gave birth to the Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21st century, which is a growing "partnership of over 40 national non-governmental, professional, health and research organizations committed to making Canadians the healthiest people in the world by advocating for an effective nationally led public health system". The Coalition's advocacy efforts center around three key thrusts:

1) national leadership (creation of the Agency, appointment of the Chief Public Health Officer, development of a national public health strategy)
2) health human resources (e.g. to strengthen the capacity of the front line workers by providing resources and infrastructure support, relevant training, etc.)
3) sustainable funding for public health in Canada (especially for front-line public health workers)

Since December 2002, the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) has also undergone change with the appointment of a new CEO, Dr. Elinor Wilson, who is also a member of our Institute's Advisory Board. CPHA is the NGO voice for public health in Canada. We encourage all those individuals from different disciplines and sectors engaged in public health to join and help strengthen the association, to ensure that we truly have a unified voice for public health in this country.

Capitalizing on the current climate, the Association is, for example, supporting the development of core competencies for public health, providing secretariat support to the Coalition's activities and planning a strategic review of its journal to ensure that it provides a premier publication of relevance to the Canadian context. IPPH is pleased to be partnering with CPHA, the Agency, and the Canadian Population Health Initiative (CPHI) on next year's national conference scheduled for September 18-21, 2005 in Ottawa, in association with Statistics Canada's data users conference, as well as on re-launching our awards program for masters and PhD students to recognize the next generation of researchers and practitioners. Consult the CPHA web site later this fall for more information, at: "http://www.cpha.ca/english/conf/cpha04/pph.html" .

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Dr. John W. Frank
Scientific Director
Canadian Institutes of Health Research — Institute of Population and Public Health

CIHR IRSC

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These are truly changing times for public health in Canada but our work has somehow just begun, providing an opportune moment to reflect on the task at hand as summarized by the following three core principles. Public health practice should:

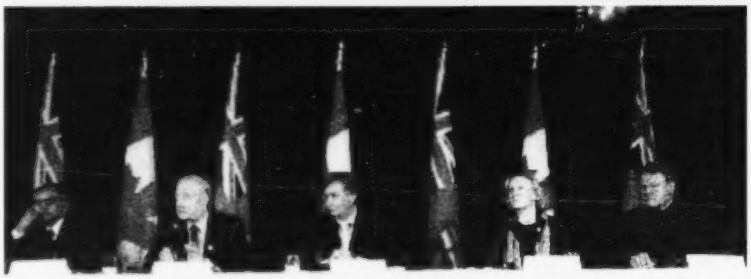
i) Seek the root causes of disease and disability, i.e. the determinants of health;
ii) Consider and deal with whole populations;
iii) Understand and apply the principles of social change, over the life course.

A robust Canadian public health infrastructure is an essential element to ensuring the systematic planning and implementation of effective preventive program and policy interventions that work in different contexts, that are led by communities and that put into practice the three principles mentioned above. It is also important to signal, at the outset, that prevention efforts have a specific ethical onus to be evidence-based, since they target entire populations, most of whom, are well - "Primum non nocere" - First do no harm. Fewer, better and more rigorously evaluated preventive intervention studies, clearly demonstrated to be both effective and safe, must therefore be at the core of this systematic effort.

We all need to collectively sustain the momentum to ensure that researchers, policy makers and practitioners are focused on getting the job done – that is, of producing relevant knowledge and ensuring its effective application to improve the policies and programs that affect the environments in which we work, live, learn, and play so as to improve community health status. If we systematically align our efforts to address the major public health problems of our time, we can make a difference in the health and lives of all Canadians.

John Frank,
Scientific Director

Announcement of Chief Public Health officer of Canada
Winnipeg, September 24, 2004



PPH RESEARCHER PROFILE: David Hammond, PhD Candidate (Psychology), University of Waterloo

David Hammond is a PhD candidate at the University of Waterloo. His research examines public policies designed to reduce the health burden from tobacco use. David's primary objective is to gather evidence that can help to inform the decision-making process and promote more effective health policy. His research on Canada's graphic cigarette warning labels has provided empirical support for Canada's labeling policy and may help to promote their implementation in other jurisdictions, such as Australia and the United Kingdom. He has also conducted research on smoke-free policies that demonstrates that more stringent smoking restrictions are more effective in helping smokers to quit and is currently involved in research evaluating the impact of Ireland's national smoke-free policy and its impact upon smoking behaviour. This project is part of the International Tobacco Control Policy Study - a longitudinal study evaluating the effectiveness of policies recommended in the WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. This study is examining tobacco policies in developed countries (Canada, the U.S, Australia, and the U.K.), as well as low and middle-income countries in South-East Asia. Finally, David is pursuing research on tobacco products themselves: to what extent do we regulate product modifications that lower the addictive properties and health risks from smoking?

David shifted from psychology to population and public health because it was an area where he could have greater impact and address broader issues. Evaluating health policy provides an opportunity to work across disciplines, not only with other researchers, but also with policy-makers and service providers. Although it can be challenging to evaluate policies that often change, are delayed, and depend upon forces beyond one's control, he has found health policy research to be a very rewarding and stimulating field of study. He has also been fortunate to work with several mentors, including Dr. Roy Cameron and his current supervisor, Dr. Geoffrey Fong: "*These mentors have encouraged me to consider the broader implications of my research and to work closely with other disciplines. Perhaps most important, they have encouraged me to think creatively and to apply a level of methodological rigour to policy research, so that it is both scientifically sound and relevant to policy-makers' needs*".

2004 SUMMER INSTITUTE & PLANS FOR OUR 2005 SUMMER INSTITUTE

The Western Regional Training Centre for Health Services Research (WRTC), the Partners in Community Health Research training program (PCHR) and the Research in Addiction and Mental Health Policy and Services training program (RAMPS) hosted the June 2004 Summer Institute in Whistler BC. IPPH, the CIHR - Institute of Health Services and Policy Research (IHSPR), the Institute of Aging (IA), the Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health (ICRH), the Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes (INMD), as well as the Summer Institute's other co-sponsors, the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) and the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIAR) are extremely grateful to the local hosts for the successful organization of this training event.

This year marks the third in a series of Summer Institutes for IPPH and IHSPR. This annual event is a key strategic capacity-building activity planned by the two Institutes to foster the creation and maintenance of complex interdisciplinary research teams and their community/policy-maker/practitioner partners. Such collaborations are increasingly recognized as critical to ensuring high-quality population and public health (PPH) and health services and policy (HSP) research and the evolution of a network of PPH and HSP researchers and research users across the country.

The 2004 Summer Institute's overarching theme was *Negotiating the Shoals of Applied Research in PPH and HSP*. This theme was chosen because the issues of negotiating research objectives and methods with decision makers is a neglected topic in many training programs, yet critical to the success of the endeavour. By bringing together students, community learners, researchers and decision makers, the Summer Institute offered a unique training opportunity, facilitated connections and provided a wide range of perspectives and values from other disciplines within and outside the research community.

Fifty-seven masters, doctoral, and postdoctoral students in the fields of PPH and HSP and other social science disciplines participated. The program content was developed to reflect the *before, during,* and *after* phases of an applied research project or program. A mix of plenary, panel discussions and workshop sessions were delivered by twenty-five experts from a variety of backgrounds and range of disciplines.

A key difference from past Summer Institutes was the inclusion of masters students and community learners. This addition was well received by participants and tutors alike.

The final report of the 2004 Summer Institute will be available on our website in the fall. Plans are now underway for a similar event to be held in the summer of 2005 in Eastern Canada. The four Atlantic-based groups,

1) ICE team at Memorial – B. Neis,
2) CHSRF/CIHR Regional Training Centre at the University of New Brunswick – E. Biden,
3) IPPH Centre for Research Development at Dalhousie University – J. Guernsey, and
4) IPPH Centre for Research Development at Dalhousie University – R. Lyons,

were approached due to their affiliation with both IPPH and IHPSR, our institutes' interest in working more closely with funded training and capacity initiatives, and to ensure an Atlantic-wide planned event. The 2005 Summer Institute will focus on the substantive themes of rural, remote and Aboriginal health and help to underscore rural aspects of population health and health services and policy research. The Committee is also recommending that the location chosen for the Institute should help to facilitate connections with community research projects and the Aboriginal community. IPPH and IHSPR will approach other interested institutes (e.g. Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health) regarding their interest in co-sponsoring the 2005 Summer Institute.

Recently Funded Initiatives in 2004

To support health research in strategic areas, IPPH and its partners funded applications addressing their respective research priorities that were submitted to CIHR's Operating Grants and Awards competitions. A complete list of funded applications can be found here:

Institute of Population and Public Health (IPPH) - Operating Grants:
http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/pdf_24355.htm

Institute of Population and Public Health (IPPH) and Institute of Genetics (IG) Operating Grants:
http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/pdf_24365.htm

Institute of Population and Public Health (IPPH) – Fellowships:
http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/pdf_24589.htm

POPULATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENT AWARD WINNERS

Together, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Institute of Population and Public Health (IPPH), the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) and the Canadian Institute for Health Information's Canadian Population Health Initiative (CPHI) are pleased to announce the winners of the inaugural Population and Public Health Student Awards. Designed to acknowledge excellence in the next generation of population and public health (PPH) researchers, policy makers and practitioners, these awards are available to Masters and PhD students enrolled in Canadian academic institutions.

This year's winners come from across Canada and are working on a range of research projects, indicative of the diversity and breadth of population and public health issues. The inaugural recipients and their winning research projects include:

Sarah Viehbeck, MA Candidate, Department of Health Studies and Gerontology, University of Waterloo for her study entitled "Tobacco use and public health."

Jena Webb, MA Candidate, Université de Québec à Montréal for her study entitled "The use of the ecosystem approach to population health: the case of mercury contamination in aquatic environments and riparian populations, Andean Amazon, Napo River Valley, Ecuador."

Sharon Yanicki, MA Candidate, School of Health Sciences, University of Lethbridge for her study entitled, "Social support and family strengths: how do low-income single mothers view support received from a home visitation program?"

Alice Chen, PhD Candidate, Department of Health Care and Epidemiology, University of British Columbia for her study entitled "Utilization of mental health services by Chinese immigrants in British Columbia."

This year's awards were presented at the CPHA Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland, held from June 13-16, 2004.

The award program aims to build the capacity of young population and public health (PPH) researchers by providing a venue to both profile their work and encourage their participation in current discussions regarding research, policy, and practice. *"For me, the student award is an affirmation of the importance of my research interest and recognition of the need to understand more about diversity in health services,"* notes Alice Chen. *"I specialize in international health, but intend on using my expertise in Canada someday, so I was very interested to hear the complications and concerns of public health researchers doing work here,"* further remarks Jena Webb.

Further information about the Population and Public Health Student Awards may be found on the CPHA website, at: "http://www.cpha.ca/english/conf/cpha04/pph.html" .

POP News EVALUATION: HOW ARE WE DOING?

As ***POP News*** is now at the end of its second year of publication, the IPPH staff would like to know whether or not it is meeting your needs. After reading this issue, could you please assist in evaluating ***POP News*** by going to this URL: "http://www.feedbackform.ca/", and answering the subsequent questions. Your feedback is much appreciated.

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IPPH Funding Opportunities

IPPH is pleased to announce the following upcoming funding opportunities:

CIHR's Institutes of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes and Population and Public Health: on Childhood Obesity - Pilot Project Grants
Deadline for full proposals: March 1, 2005
http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/22299.html

CIHR International Opportunity Program
Deadline for full proposals: December 1, 2004
http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/22308.html

For a complete list of funding opportunities of interest to the PPH community, please visit the CIHR website at:
http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/825.html

IPPH Publications

The following Publications are available in both print and electronic form. To download a **.pdf** or **.html** file of these documents, please visit our website at —
URL: http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/13789.html

Mapping and Tapping the Wellsprings of Health, Strategic Plan 2002-2007

Mapping and Tapping the Wellsprings of Health, Executive Summary 2002-2007

Institute of Population and Public Health Annual Reports

Charting the Course

Building Public Health Research, Education and Development in Canada: A Five-Site Consultation

Pop News, Issues 1-5, January 2003—November 2004